



City of Carlsbad

Office of the Chief of Police

POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS

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POLICE ASK FOR PUBLIC'S HELP WITH MISUSE OF OLD CELL PHONES

Providing children with old cell phones to play with may seem like a good idea but due to an FCC rule that is intended to protect the public, critical emergency resources can end up being diverted away from their primary function.

An FCC mandate requires a cell phone without a service contract to still have the ability to call 9-1-1 when the phone is turned on. Parents have unknowingly given their children old cell phones to play with and ended up with calls being made to 9-1-1. In a recent case, over 450 calls were made to Carlsbad's 9-1-1 center during one week by a child playing with a phone parents thought was completely disconnected.

When dispatchers receive a 9-1-1 call, officers are sent to the location, even if the call is disconnected, to check the welfare of the caller. This becomes resource-intensive when that call is made from a cellular phone as the caller's location may be unknown or inexact as compared to a traditional landline phone. If the cellular caller cannot give an exact location, considerable resources are needed to get help to that location as quickly as possible.

"To keep our resources available to help in real emergencies, we ask that parents not give old cell phones to their children to play with," said Police Communications Manager Debbie Grady. "We also recommend that residents maintain a traditional landline phone to make 9-1-1 calls to assure that in an emergency, help will get to them as quickly as possible."

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